



Title	Circle of Friends
Created by	Lisa Handelman, The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, Capital Camps
Intended Audience	Teens, adults, lay leaders, individuals without prior experience working in the area of inclusion
Materials Needed	No material needed. Space for the group to form a large circle
Program Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First, ask everyone to stand in a close inner circle; this may end up being a blob in the center rather than a circle. Encourage the group to get as close together as they feel comfortable doing.</li> <li>2. The leader stands outside this circle and tells the group that this inner circle represents our closest friends and family members; in this circle disabilities seem to fade away.</li> <li>3. The leader asks the group to think about who is in their “inner circle” (the group is not asked to share, only to think and reflect quietly)</li> <li>4. The leader shares with the group that individuals with disabilities and individuals without disabilities usually report having very similar “inner circles”. In the “inner circle” a person’s disability does not define their relationship with those who share their circle. There is often a sense of unconditional love in our inner circles, among those we are closest to and among those we love.</li> <li>5. Next, ask everyone to stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle; move out from the “inner circle” to this “close circle” of friends.</li> <li>6. The leader stands inside this circle and tells the group that this circle represents a circle of friends (your real close friends, not Facebook friends or work acquaintances).</li> <li>7. The leader asks the group to think about who is in their circle of friends - who do you lean on during times of trouble? Who do you want on your “A list” during times of celebration? Who do you connect with at church/synagogue or your place of worship?</li> <li>8. The leader asks the group to think about what they do when they are with their circle of friends – what kind of activities and experiences do they share with their closest friends?</li> <li>9. Next ask everyone to spread out as far as possible so that individuals are not touching.</li> <li>10. The leader tells the group that this outside circle represents the business side</li> </ol>

	<p>of our busy lives; multiple vendor/customer relationships; usually involving monetary interaction and some level of imbalance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. The leader asks the group to think about how much time is spent interacting with others who provide a service (teachers, coaches, therapists, hair dressers, drivers, personal trainers, etc.).</li> <li>12. The leader asks the group to think about how much time they spend with others as “receivers” of help or support rather than as “givers” of help or support or as an equal in the give and take of relationships.</li> <li>13. Additional thought questions:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studies have shown that young people with disabilities spend more time in the third circle than in the second (some of this is due to the need for tutors, physical therapists, speech/language therapists, etc.) – How does this time away from community affect them and their families? How much does this time away from the community affect their ability to create a “circle of friends”?</li> <li>• Children with disabilities who attend camp say they are looking for the middle circle – a circle of friends, a circle of community. Adults with disabilities in our community have also communicated a feeling of loneliness or being disconnected. How do we help everyone create a “circle of friends”?</li> <li>• Think about your own “circle of friends” – if you do not have a disability, does your circle include individuals with disabilities?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
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